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Contents.

	PAGE
Notes of the Month	1
A Thought for the Month ..	2
From Disciple to Master. By Rev. John Barron	3
The Physical Welfare of Mothers and Children. By S. Shannon Millin, B.L.	4
A Visit to Rheims. By J. L. Garvin	5
In Letters from a Y.M.C.A. Hut in France	7
East and West	9
Memorial Notices	9
Lesson Notes for Teachers ..	10
Reports: — Ballyhemlin; Banbridge; Clough; Downpatrick; Newry; Templepatrick	12
Echoes	14

Notes of the month.

It is stated that the Pope's peace Note has been received in Berlin and Vienna with great satisfaction. That is, of course, only to be expected. Berlin and Vienna inspired the Note, and it is only natural therefore that they should give a welcome to the Papal communication. The document, however, has not been received with satisfaction by the Allies, but with the reverse. America sees in it nothing but a pro-German attitude. It implicitly acquits Germany of guilt in making the war. It disregards the Allies' object in seeking victory with a view to prevent future aggression by the German military caste, and it adopts the German claim to "freedom of the seas," which means that while the German Army is free to pursue its own peculiar methods on land the British Navy is to be forbidden to blockade at sea. The Note does not satisfy the urgent demands of restoration and reparation.

* *

The Allies are justified in basing the Papal intervention upon German inspiration. Special importance therefore attaches to Mr. Gerard's first-hand information of the real meaning of the German terms, and particularly of the favourite German phrase with guarantees. "What about Belgium," he asked Herr Bethmann-Hollweg in January when the last German peace overtures were made. Herr Bethmann-Hollweg told him Germany was ready to withdraw from Belgium with guarantees. It appeared that her guarantees not only meant the possession of the fortresses of Namur, Liege, Antwerp, and of the whole Belgian railways, but of Belgian industry and economic life. There was to be no Belgian army, but there was to be a strong German army in Belgium to make sure that the unfortunate country was not converted into a bulwark by wicked England. In fact, as Mr. Gerard put it, all that the German withdrawal amounted to was this—that King Albert was to be permitted to live in Brussels with a guard of honour. Northern France, Roumania, and Serbia were to be restored, presumably after the same Teutonic manner, but certainly not, we may be sure, in accordance with the Allies' views of restoration. So long as the Pope regards the situation from

the Central Empires point of view he may save himself the trouble of meddling, for peace will not come that way.

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Erratum.—On page 5 of the August Number, instead of Silch read Sikh.

* *

Mr. S. Shannon Millin writes to us as follows:—Might I draw your attention to a slight error that appears in the August issue of the "Non-Subscribing Presbyterian," in the article on the death of Mr. F. D. Finlay. It is stated that the presentation to his father, in 1844, was from the First Congregation. I have already pointed out in my History of the Second Congregation (page 57) that a similar statement which appears in "Historic Memorials of the First Presbyterian Church" was erroneous; and the Rev. A. Gordon afterwards publicly acknowledged the accuracy of my correction. The presentation was made by a joint committee of the two congregations, out of surplus moneys subscribed by the members for defraying the expenses in connection with the Dissenters' Chapels Bill. A copy of the address presented to Mr. Finlay appears at page 113 of my "History," and it was presented to him "on behalf of the "Non-Subscribing Presbyterians of Ireland," and signed by James Andrews and George K. Smith as secretaries.

* *

"Old Frank," as he was popularly called, was a devoted member of the Second Congregation, and a close personal friend of its minister, the Rev. John Porter. There is no more interesting figure among the early Belfast Unitarian worthies than Frank Finlay. The son of a small farmer in Ards, he worked his way from a "printer's devil" till he became the founder and proprietor of the "Northern Whig," through the columns of which he fearlessly advocated the cause of Catholic Emancipation and religious toleration generally. In 1826 he was convicted, at Carrickfergus, to "three months' imprisonment without the option of a fine," for libel. Four years later he was defendant in a second action for libel, in connection with three articles which appeared in the "Whig," on the Hertford extortion of tenants. On the eve of the Downpatrick Assizes, Dr. Montgomery and Finlay met Dan O'Connell to engage him as Counsel for the impending action, and the latter remarked: "My Church is so greatly indebted to the 'Whig' for what it has done in the cause of toleration, that I will act as your Counsel on one condition—and that is, that I accept your Brief without a fee." The action did not come to a hearing.

A Thought for the Month

"God in History."

"And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth"—Acts xvii. 26.

"What, then, is the kind of test by which, on this crowded stage, the two wills may be distinguished? Exactly the same as that which serves us within the inclosure of the individual mind. *There*, as we have found, it is God that *inspires* for man to *realize*. The *ideals* are his: the actuals that come out of them, or that fail to come out of them, are ours. We feel his authority, we know his look, in whatever stands before our thought as higher, and claims us as its own. We are conscious of unfaithfulness, we pass under eclipse of divine light, in refusing to rise to the appeal, and staying to do our own work upon the levels of ease. It is no otherwise on the large scale of history. Nations, as well as private persons, have their impulses and opportunities, their gleams of a better, their temptations to a worse: and here, also, to give the higher initiative is the divine part; to fling it away and forget it, or to follow it up the glorious ascent, is the human. Hence, on the principle that man cannot lift himself, but can freely give himself to be lifted, a simple rule

emerges from tracking the steps of Providence through the ages. Where there is nothing to be seen but bare conservation of what good there is, or, at best, only a local extension of it to classes or regions not brought up to its level, the human will is the chief agent, working on its own prosaic and unaspiring flat, and content to stand alone. Where there is continuous growth, and advance to loftier stages of life and character, and the men of each generation leave the world better than they found it, there we are on the vestiges of the divine Agent, and trace his moral government in history."—(Dr. Martineau: "Seat of Authority in Religion.")

FROM DISCIPLE TO MASTER.

By Rev. John Barron.

The disciple when he is perfected shall be as his Master. Luke vi. 40. Though he was a Son, yet learned obedience by the things that he suffered; and having been made perfect (by his obedience) he became unto all them that obey him the author of eternal salvation. Hebrews v. 8, 9.

Here are two texts which teach us that Christ himself had at some time or other to pass through the training of a disciple before he obtained the power and wisdom of a Master.

The teaching concerning Christ, most common in the Churches, is that he was a new creation, that he came into the world a perfect being, that he needed to learn nothing, that for him there was no need of development. That is not the teaching of these texts, which convey to us the purpose of Discipleship: that when the Disciple is perfected in his training he shall be as his Master. The apprentice learning a trade, it may be as a carpenter, a mason, or any other craft, it may be as a seaman, goes through stage after stage of his training, becomes more and more skilled every year of his apprenticeship. A seaman's apprentice gets his "mate's ticket," and then his "master's ticket."

Now, Discipleship means serving an apprenticeship in order to become a Master. Paul, who strove to be a wise master-builder, was very keen, very ardent, about "winning the prize of his high calling," and counted everything else worthless in order to win Christ, to win to the Christ stage, to become a Master, even as Christ was.

Notice how the second text describes Christ as *a* Son, not *the* Son. He himself tells us what the mark of a Son of God is, "one to whom the word of God has come," one who doesn't now need a teacher, one who doesn't need any Scripture, any outward help whatever, to learn, but who sees the Truth for himself, who can speak with authority, who has obtained liberty—"the glorious liberty of a Son of God." Yet though he was *a* Son, yet he had to learn obedience, to obtain discipline, by the things that he suffered, by the things that he had to endure. He had turned the circumstances of his life into a means of training, and when he became perfect by his obedience, he, in his turn, became unto all them that obey him the author of eternal salvation, the means of liberty to others, giving power to all who trust him, trust his teaching, to become Sons of God also.

In a sense, all who belong to the Church of Christ are his disciples; so were the crowds that heard him gladly, so were the seventy. But there was a more definite sense in which men became his disciples. There were a dozen men whom he selected, men who had left all to follow him. And just as in the indentures of an apprentice, the "mysteries" of the trade the boy has to be taught are mentioned, so these disciples were taught what were called the "mysteries of the kingdom," or, as they were afterwards referred to, "the mysteries of Jesus." There was talk for three hundred years after of what those mysteries were, and they were spoken of as divided into two grades—the Greater Mysteries and the Lesser Mysteries.

The path of Discipleship was called the Narrow Way, and "few there be that find it." [We can leave out of

consideration altogether "the broad road that leadeth to destruction"; someone has seen fit to add a note in the Gospel of Matthew, thinking that if there is a Narrow Way there must also be a broad one, but the other Gospels don't mention it.]

We are given some idea of what the training on the Narrow Way meant when Christ asks certain of his disciples whether they are able to drink the cup that he shall drink of, and to be baptised with the baptism that he is baptised with. Taking his own life as an allegory of that Path, we have the Birth (the new birth into the spiritual life), the Baptism of Water, the Baptism of Fire (i.e., the transfiguration), the Baptism of Blood (the final suffering) culminating in the ultimate Triumph, when, in the words of the Book of Revelation, the Victor over sin and death has become a Pillar in the temple of his God; and as another sacred book expresses it, "He standeth now like a white pillar to the West, upon whose face the rising Sun of thought eternal poureth forth its first most glorious waves. His mind, like a becalmed and boundless ocean, spreadeth out in shoreless space. He holdeth life and death in his strong hand."

This has the support of the great doctor of the Early Church, Origen, who tells us that even in his day the Mysteries of Jesus were still preserved, never written down, but only hinted at, in public teaching. That the Scriptures have body, soul, and spirit; but the letter killeth and the spirit giveth life, that the birth, the baptism, the transfiguration, the crucifixion, and the resurrection are all emblems of the teaching, that is the soul of Christianity. Clement of Alexandria, speaking of the Mysteries, says that he is afraid, lest in saying too much, he should be reaching a two-edged sword to a child, for this teaching to the unprepared was dangerous. He calls this the Great Conflict, and he speaks of it as the Greater Mysteries; but he says there is a conflict before the conflict, and such are the Lesser Mysteries, to which any whose life for a long time has been a good life are made welcome.

Students of this particular period of Church history have been impatient with such statements, and have dismissed them as vagaries; but, in the fuller light of the Science of Comparative Religion, they assume a new value. Before the Strait Gate of the Narrow Way comes before us, we must have learned to walk along the Probationary Path, and that is as much as most of us are at present ready for, and the qualifications to be worked more or less into the character are to be found in the Sermon on the Mount. Surely these were not meant to be taken all at once, but one at a time, thinking about each and trying to live it day after day. If ever this conflict is too severe there are the commandments. Hast thou kept the commandments? Undertake not too heavy a burden. "My yoke is easy." Life gives us the opportunity. Life gives us the discipline. By making use of it we receive the training by what we have to endure.

Only a human Christ can be an example to us. A miraculous Christ could not give us the same inspiring example as one who has climbed up the same road that we are climbing. Everything in life, every sort of experience—tempted in all points like as we are, yet without "missing the mark"—he made use of it all for training and discipline, and so he gave us the assurance that when the Disciple is perfected he shall be as his Master.

"THE PHYSICAL WELFARE OF MOTHERS AND CHILDREN."

By S. Shannon Millin, B.A., Barrister-at-Law.

"Do you hear the children weeping, O my brothers,
Ere the sorrow comes with years?
They are leaning their young heads against their mothers,
And *that* cannot stop their tears."

The importance of child life has never been brought into greater prominence than to-day, when, in the midst of a stupendous war of attrition, the economic value of men and women,

endowed with *mens sana in corpore sano*, is seen in its true perspective. By the force of circumstances it is now becoming more generally recognised that one of the great social problems—and by no means the least important—is that of child-life as a national asset. The appalling sacrifice of human life on the battle-fields of the world, and the steadily declining birth-rate, are facts that have to be acknowledged, and faced with a determined resolution, that the welfare of the State is of greater importance than that of the money-grabber.

"Ill fares the land—to hastening ills a prey—
Where wealth accumulates and men decay."

The Carnegie United Kingdom Trust has already recognised the importance of infant mortality, and early in 1916 the trustees had under their consideration the possibility of taking steps to assist in the promotion of the physical welfare of mothers and young children, and they decided—

"To investigate and report upon the existing provision for promoting the Physical Welfare of Mothers and Children, with special reference to the existing provision to Schools for Mothers, Health Houses, etc., the legislation that exists for governing the administration of such centres, and the extent to which municipal authorities have availed themselves of the powers they possess in the matter. Further, to suggest whether any, and if so what steps might be taken by the trustees to encourage the provision of such centres, and under what conditions."

As the outcome of that decision, a number of eminent men and women were appointed throughout the kingdom to draw up reports, and already three large volumes have been printed, dealing with England, Wales, and Ireland; that dealing with Scotland has not yet appeared in print. The volume dealing with Ireland—with which we are more immediately concerned—consists of 213 pages, 4to., and is compiled by E. Coey Bigger, Esq., M.D., M.Ch., Medical Commissioner of the Local Government Board for Ireland. The volume, in addition to Dr. Bigger's Report of 105 pages, contains valuable appendices and interesting articles on particular aspects of the larger question by Ella G. A. Webb, M.D.; Marion B. Andrews, M.D., D.P.H.; Alice Barry, M.R.C.P.I., D.P.H.; and Prudence E. Gaffikin, L.R.C.P. & S., Edin.

Dr. Coey Bigger, who belongs to an old and respected Belfast family, has dealt most exhaustively with his subject, and in addition to a lengthened and varied medical experience, he is possessed of a kindly, sympathetic heart, as may be seen from his following statement:—

"Ireland needs men, and yet of every hundred children born, nine die before they reach the age of twelve months. Is that nothing? Is that a matter for the shrugging of the shoulders and a passing-by on the other side? Is it possible to neglect the lives of those children and retain a clear conscience? 'Am I my brother's keeper?' was the question of a murderer. Is it to be ours to-day? If not, let us, in the name of heaven, our country, and our self-respect, tackle the problem, and devise ways and means to cheat Death of the lives of the infants which he now regards as his lawful prey."

(To be continued.)

A VISIT TO RHEIMS.

By J. L. Garvin.

We came to Coucy-le-Chateau. What was it? Dismantled long ago, it was yet amongst all castles what our towered Durham on its rock is amongst all cathedrals. The barons built here in a tall and solid spirit, as the priests built at Laon over there, behind that near thick-forested massif which the Germans still hold. The round crenellated keep that topped the rest was a hundred feet wide. "This is the king of all towers," wrote once a proud antiquary, "others are spindles beside it." In profile the Castle of Coucy, with its donjon and avenues, looked like Windsor. You will never see it.

Its giant fall has thrown a mountain of stones down the hill. Above the sky shows through the vacant windows of one mighty wall. The Boche makes war on the works of ages and on the soul within us all.

For what of the day after, tragic and fantastic, in this compressed diary of of the unbelievable—the day of Rheims? Thousands of soldiers sleeping, yet grim, packed into hundreds of motor lorries, were moving through the interminable avenue of the road along the Aisne. In Soissons the venerable cathedral stood rent and shaken and may fall. That was an introduction. Later in the morning we walked through rising fields of barley. On the mild crest of the ground something distant, small, distinct, familiar, came in view. It was Rheims. It stands out from all this lovely rolling landscape like something apart, as though it had been framed above and had floated down like the ark. We heard the steady booming of the German guns.

On the hill with the obelisk, where Napoleon watched the battle of 1814, we lunched. Through the trees and airy screens of dried leaves we saw and heard Rehims being pounded from the sombre heights on either side. The cathedral was now much closer and stood clear over the wide-ranging houses. We saw the shell-bursts falling round it. Two miles away, and it seemed less, this was going on under our eyes, and we could not stop it. The bombardment is sullen, obstinate, malign. It is an attempt to shake France by a sabotage of her soul. It rolls a hollow thunder. From a thousand to two thousand shells had been falling into the city every day for the last six weeks. Another crash comes while you are being asked if you will have some galantine. Most tragedy is necessarily punctuated by regular meals. We have permission to go into the city. We drive rapidly through the streets. In the deserted Boulevard Gerbert our motor chooses this moment to break a tyre. It would. This happens just when a recent shell has caught a lamp-post and knocked it silly. For us, the street is quiet. It is the first of the incorrigibly diverting contrasts with which the world at its worst is crossed. We must go to Pommery's, if you please. The tower is broken, but girls are packing champagne as coolly as the stout old white-bearded Mayor and the Town Council transact their civic affairs in a champagne-cellar. My brave French people! We have to go down into the catacombs amongst millions of bottles and come up to pledge the Allies in an estimable vintage of 1904. You cannot buy it. I do not believe this scene is real, but, nevertheless, keep the cork. Who could have expected this preliminary?

Word comes that the cathedral is opened for us. Through streets knocked to pieces we pass to the Place du Parvis. We are there. More than twelve years ago I last stood in that square—now grass-grown, shell-pitted—and looked up to that marvellous precipice of beauty and sculptured prayer—huge as rock, delicate as lace, all imagined and shaped, carven, fretted, with an endless grace and creativeness of joy and faith. Now the portals are barricaded with sand-bags. But, aloft, many of the little suave statues are limbless or headless, the niches are chipped, the rose-window has lost half the ancient glass that glowed like gems. Above and below its wheeling tracery the arcade and the exquisite light parapet show broken stretches. High up to the gallery of the kings and to the twin-turrets, mouldings are blunted, surfaces flayed. And yet austere and immense, gracious though stricken, it is more majestic in its desolation than when I last saw it on a feast-day in its old glory, and it stands the most knee-compelling thing on earth. The apse and the southern side are still more battered. Pinnacles, statues, little arches under the flying buttresses have fallen. There is worse within. The great vault and roof are widely open to the sky. Around apse and choir the windows are skeletons. Glass and fragments fall and fall each day, and each day are piously collected. There are shell holes in the nave. Three shells pitched in that morning, a few hours before our

visit ; there were eight the day before. Just now, as we look about, and grieve with little speaking, the Boche is quiet, but even when he is quiet he is damned.

From the road to Epernay we turned aside to Rilly. On one side of the road a little child hung on to its mother's apron. On the other side we looked across leagues and leagues of vineyards flourishing. On the right a bombardment raged over grim Mont Cornillet, now peeled bare against the horizon of this fertile scene, laughing in fruitfulness and peace. And on the left Rheims Cathedral, lit by the evening sun, gleamed small, but gave its whole shape. It was the parting view.

IN LETTERS FROM A Y.M.C.A. HUT IN FRANCE.

Continued from June Issue.

Oct. 27.—These men, as many do, wanted to know when I got any rest. Their interest in my welfare, especially in regard to sleep, often astonishes me, considering how little they get themselves, and the fearful hardships most of them encounter. I was able to tell these that I had had more or less than three hours already—in shoes and overcoat. I went to bed properly at 4-30 a.m. and slept soundly till 7 a.m. —half an hour later than I had intended to rise. One of the men told me the other day that it is quite a common thing when troops are on the march, and they halt for their periodic five minutes' rest, that they all lie down on the ground, and in a few seconds, officers and all—the men with their heavy packs on their backs—fall fast asleep—nearly all of them.

Nov. 3.—A man has just asked for a piece of string to tie up his mackintosh. I wondered why he was so "pernickerty," for I supposed he meant a twopenny packet of Mackintosh's toffee. I was mistaken ; it was his waterproof ground-sheet, which he wished to lace round his body over a piece of old sacking, being devoid of hat and tunic, which, with the rest of his kit, he had left in the train which left him on the platform yesterday.

The musical cook has gone on leave and stayed beyond it. Meanwhile the other orderly has left this morning. The R.T.O. has lent me a Belfast man from the Shankill to save the situation. His arms are adorned in red and blue with a soldier and a sailor, and a horrible picture of "Mary" and half a dozen other figures ; but he is doing his best, and very creditably on the whole.

Nov. 5.—I had only one visitor in the night—an Australian, 5ft. $11\frac{1}{2}$ inches in height. A fine fellow in his way, a "big" farmer. Used swear words and profane phrases with the gentlest voice imaginable ; had been stabbed in a scrap in Chinatown ; apt to get through £100 in a single spree ; admired our Houses of Parliament, *especially* Henry VII's chapel, which he seemed to think was a part of them ; also the Tower of London ; but thought the jewels should be put in a melting-pot. . . . frankly, a fairly "bad hat," yet a very "good fellow," and I liked him very well ! He and I had breakfast together in the parlour. On departure he insisted on giving me two francs instead of 5d. for the breakfast and my "courtesy." Three of his brothers have been killed in the war ; only his 21 year old sister left at home now. He is of Breton ancestry.

. . . In a street in that town I saw two French youths—tall and short —salute each other. The tall one gave his friend a chirping kiss on each cheek. The tall one had on a dark blue cloth tam o' shanter and a French grey jacket ; the other had ultramarine trousers. Also, the other day I saw a young French soldier kiss a girl at the end of her shop counter. It made her blush beautifully, but I think she liked it, although he must have been only a cousin at most—possibly no more than a mere brother, as he went on into the private part of the house.

Nov. 10.—We had a great crowd in yesterday evening. Almost a rabble—so eager for cigarettes and other treats, after being in the mud for months, far

away from such creature comforts. . . . They were so eager to be served that they knocked down my glasses of beautiful chrysanthemums on the counter—"Catherines," as the French people call them, presumably in honour of the Saint. Also they plied me with all sorts of epithets in hope of getting on the right side of me to be helped out of turn, such as "Governor," "Boss," "Matey," and "Captain," and even "Jock." . . .

A man had been telling me how it was just like being in heaven to be for his few days at home with his wife and child. He had called to see his mother, and brothers, and sisters for a few hours' break in the journey, made them a little present—"two or three 'apence"—and went west to see his wife. He stayed "prac'ly orl the time with ther missus" Bought a gramaphone and a few records to cheer her up in the winter; put £10 in the P.O. Bank, and spent every other "'ap'ney" on food or other prudence. If only he "could have stayed at home with the missus and the child orl the rest of the time!"

Jim, the Belfast man, is fairly delighted with himself and things in general. He is greatly set up in himself, because he had a hand in supplying a big rush. He goes in for jokes of a sort. He wants to know what will be done with all the Y.M. huts after the war—thinks of buying one himself—to house a menagerie. He became so facetious this morning (his last on duty in the hut) that I asked if he intended to be clown as well as manager in his own menagerie, but he replied that the people who came to look at it would be the clowns.

Nov. 12. I never saw gratuitous work for which there is as much gratitude as there is for this. Even many of the officers seem to make a point of not allowing the workers the possibility of supposing or fearing that they are performing a thankless task. . . . As for the ranks, their gratitude for small mercies is quite touching—quite like an act of religion to my thinking; as if they thought that the blessings received in one hut could not be renewed in another unless they duly returned thanks. . . . The last to leave the hut, lingering on the threshold, gave me a wonderfully wistful look, and thanked me for all my kindness, and whilst I was wondering what it had been, I recognised him as one of three youths to whom I had brought special blankets to cover them on the draughty floor, because I had heard their three special coughs—two of them lying under one cover. They were all three bright, cheery fellows—happy looking and brave.

> "Who shall nerve heroic boys
> To hazard all in Freedom's fight;
> Break sharply off their jolly games,
> Forsake their comrades gay,
> And quit proud homes and youthful dames
> For famine, toil, and fray?"

Nov. 13.—Among the very small number of men at my evening service was a Worcestershire man. He and a boy of 18 were in the hut at the time, and readily accepted the invitation to come in. . . . This man made a very beautiful prayer, showing that his religion had been a very real thing to him all his life, and in time of peril. For simplicity and fitness of language—steeped in Scriptural quotation and allusion, I never heard anything better. . . . He had a strange swelling on his right jaw, and a left arm stiffened by poison. . . . Another, a "full" corporal, who was in charge of the rest, was only able to whisper his orders. He had been buried three times, and had lost his voice on each occasion, recovering it the first and second time under electric treatment, and hoping for the same fortune for a third time. He was perfectly cheerful, and looked fat and well.

Nov. 14.—The following dialogue took place in the bunk-room last night, or rather at 1-45 this morning:—

I.—There is just one blanket to spare now. Who can put in the best claim for that? (The last but one having been allotted with the consent of silence to one of the men who had a bad cold).

1st Bunker.—Well, I've got a brother in the Navy?

2nd Bunker (almost simultaneously). —I could do with it.

I.—Well, then ; what's your claim ? Have *you* got a brother in the Navy ?

2nd Bunker.—No ; but I've got three in the Army.

. . . This morning, when some had already left, and the rest were in readiness for the road, one of them came to the counter with such a mysterious look on his face, that I wondered what he was going to do. It was merely to say in a very quiet, gentle voice, "I want to thank you for the way you looked after us last night." . . . all the rest looking on from a distance across the hut, and by their pleasant looks and "good-byes," and "thank you's," as soon as he began to move off again, I am sure they knew better than I had done why he had come to me.

EAST AND WEST.

Men look to the East for the dawning things,
For the light of a rising sun ;
But they look to the West, the crimson West,
For the things that are done, are done.

The Eastward sun is a new-made hope,
From the dark of the night distilled ;
But the Westward sun is a sunset sun—
Is the sun of a hope fulfilled.

For out of the East they have always come,
The cradle that saw the birth
Of all the heart-warm hopes of men,
And all the hopes of earth.

For out of the East a Christ arose,
And out of the East there gleamed
The dearest dream and the clearest dream
That ever prophet dreamed.

And into the waiting West they come,
With the dream-child of the East,
And find the hopes they had hoped of old
A thousand times increased.

—*Anonymous.*

Memorial Notices.

MR. JAMES HERON.

Another link with the old-time mercantile life of Belfast has been broken by the death of Mr. John Heron, which took place on 22nd July at his residence, Maryfield, Holywood. Mr. Heron, who was 87 years of age, had been greatly upset by the loss of his elder brother, Mr. Wm. Cowan Heron, D.L., in the early part of last month, but he was able so recently as the 4th July to preside, at Dromore, at the annual meeting of the Cowan-Heron Hospital, founded by his brother, and in whose stead he was elected president. A few days later he contracted a severe cold, and pneumonia, which developed, hastened the end.

The father of Mr. Heron, and his brother, Wm. Cowan Heron, with whom he hah lived at Holywood since they retired from business nearly fifty years ago, was Mr. John Heron, a West India merchant, and shipowner in the city, and who in 1836 assisted to found the Ulster Bank. The deceased, with the brother referred to and another named John Heron, who died some years ago, joined his father in the business of the firm over 65 years ago, and was actively identified with its fortunes until the time of his retirement. The funeral was private.

* *

MRS. JOHN THOMPSON.

The Newry Congregation has sustained a great loss by the death of Mr. L. J. Thompson, widow of the late Mr. John Thompson, master painter and decorator. The sad event occurred on Thursday, August 9th, after a trying illness patiently borne.

The only daughter of the late Mr. James Colvin, a devoted member of the Church, and for several years the Hon. Treasurer, the deceased lady inherited her father's warm interest in the affairs of the Congregation ; and both she and her late husband will long be remembered for their generous services. Of a quiet, kindly nature, she endeared herself to a wide circle

of friends, and many are the manifestations of sorrow occasioned by her decease. The funeral took place on Saturday, August 11th, and was attended by a large number of friends, representative of the Church members, and also the professional, business, and commercial life of the town, thus testifying to the esteem in which the deceased, her late husband, and family were held in Newry and district. The chief mourners were Mr. A. Thompson, Sergeant J. C. Thompson, and Mr. John Thompson (sons).

Rev. G. J. Slipper conducted a brief service in the home, and officiated at the graveside in the Old Meeting House Green. On the following Sabbath a Memorial Service was conducted by the minister, who, in the course of an impressive address, paid a warm tribute to the character and services of the departed friend. Appropriate hymns were sung, and at the conclusion of the service the Dead March was rendered, Mrs. Slipper presiding at the organ.

LESSON NOTES FOR TEACHERS.

To be used in accordance with the Scheme of Bible Instruction for 1917 arranged by the Sunday School Committee of the N.S.P.C.I.

2nd September. The Last Supper. Read Mark xiv. 12-31. Key Text, Luke xxii. 19.

1. *The Feast of the Passover.* This was the greatest religious festival of the year for the Jews, when they celebrated God's mercy in passing over their houses when every Egyptian household was smitten with the death of the firstborn, on the eve of the departure of the Jews from their bondage in Egypt. Jesus, like all other Jews, kept this festival, but he gave it a new meaning. It became for him and his followers the last supper before they all met together again in the kingdom of God. For *elder scholars.* Note that Mark, Matthew, and Luke all place the last supper on the day of the Passover. John, however, places it on the day *before* the Passover, and thus the Crucifixion falls on the actual feast day, Jesus being the new Paschal lamb. This difference, however, does not matter much. Jesus is just as much the Lamb of God, whether he died on the Passover or the day after.

2. *Dark forebodings.* Jesus astonished and dismayed the disciples by laying bare the treacherous heart of one of them, namely, Judas.

3. *The Sacrament of the Last Supper.* Jesus felt that death was very near. He had challenged the great religious leaders by setting before men a new and more spiritual idea of the Messiahship. He knew that before the kingdom of God could come the greatest sacrifices would have to be made, even unto death. Therefore he seized the opportunity of the Passover Supper to give his disciples a sign that would bind them eternally together in him. His body and blood were to be sacrificed. Therefore let them regard the bread and wine as his body and blood, and so take part with him in his sacrifice. The fact is, that all we eat and drink comes from the sacrifice of the body and blood of someone—usually our parents. They spend themselves that we may live. But the food and drink Jesus stands for is the bread and water of life eternal. Luke (xxii. 19) strikes the right note when he gives us Jesus' words: "This do in remembrance of me." We keep the Last Supper so as to remember Jesus, and remembering Jesus we become like him, and so make ourselves worthy of eternal life. For *elder scholars.* Stress the fact that we do not keep the Last Supper because we are already good, but that we may be strengthened in goodness through remembering the goodness of Jesus, and so partaking of his spirit.

9th September. Gethsemane. Read Mark xiv. 32-46. Key Text, Mark xiv. 36.

1. The *Garden of Gethsemane.* As night came on, Jesus felt that his hour of trial was creeping very near. So he went with his disciples to a little garden of olives (Gethsemane means "oil press") in order to commune privately

with God. His soul was much perturbed, and wisely he sought strength and resolution from the Fount of Mercy. God alone can really help us when the clouds are darkest. He left eight of his eleven disciples (Judas had already deserted) to watch near the entrance, and took the three—Peter, James, and John—to watch quite near him. No doubt he felt for a while that he might still be able to overcome opposition. But he had not long been in the garden before he knew that he must be prepared for death, and then his chief warning to his disciples was that they should pray lest they enter into temptation. He did not wish them to be tried as he was to be tried: he knew that they were willing, but, like most men, weak, and feared that they too might desert him and join the enemy. The crowds were already abandoning him because he would not give them the selfish and sordid triumph they wanted. They found it hard to follow one who trusted above all things in God and Goodness. One disciple, Judas, had already failed, and Jesus knew that only God himself could keep the other disciples firm.

Their sleepiness is like the sleepiness of most men in matters religious and spiritual. What we ought to aim at is to be wakeful and ready always to do good.

2. *Our Lord's agony.* His flesh was weak. His flesh would have preferred an easier way to victory than suffering and death. But his spirit gave him strength to say: "Not my will, but Thine be done."

3. *The Betrayal.* Nothing could be meaner than Judas' kiss of friendship. To do evil is bad enough, but to do evil to those we profess to be friendly with is the worst of crimes. Jesus made no resistance. Strengthened by God, he could face the worst. His disciples, however, who had slept instead of opening their hearts to the Divine strength, proved weak. They forgot their master and his cause, and fled.

16*th September.* *Peter's Denial.* Read Mark xiv. 53-72. Key Text, Mark xiv. 38.

1. *Peter's impetuosity.* Peter was unmistakably the most active and loyal of all the disciples, and Jesus regarded him as his chief support, calling him "The Rock" ("Peter" means "The Rock"). He it was who indignantly asserted at the Last Supper (Mark xiv. 29-31) that he would stand by Jesus to the very last. He it was (John xviii. 10) who bravely drew his sword and struck off the ear of one of the force sent to arrest Jesus.

2. *Peter's weakness.* Jesus knew that it was not enough for a man to be bold and eager in order to be a devoted follower. So he warned Peter that at the supreme moment he would betray him. He also told Peter how to guard against weakness, when, in the Garden of Gethsemane, he said: "Watch and pray." He had great hopes of Simon Peter, but he knew that he lacked *constant spiritual preparation.*

The motto of the Boy Scouts is "Be Prepared," which means: "Take every opportunity to strengthen yourself morally, spiritually, and physically," so that you will be ready for anything." It is easy enough to be brave on impulse, but it is hard to stand up against a sudden temptation.

3. *The Denial.* Peter, after the one brave stroke with the sword, had fled with the rest; but he soon plucked up courage enough to follow Jesus and enter into the High Priest's house, where the first stage of Jesus' ordeal was taking place. He saw his master accused of blasphemy, because he had foretold the coming of a new and nobler order of things. He saw him apparently weak before the buffets and insults of his persecutors. No doubt, if Jesus had raised a finger to defend himself, Peter would have rushed to fight and die with him. But he was not strong enough to put up a *moral* fight. He could not face jeers and insults, and therefore thrice denied his Lord before the mocking accusation of those about him. Many of us are like that. We let those about us speak and act in coarse, mean, and wicked ways, without daring to stand up for the good,

because we fear insult. Be prepared to bear insult, mockery, and contempt if you would not deny Christ. Peter, fortunately, repented of his cowardice, and afterwards was the leading spirit among the early Christians.

23rd September. The Crucifixion. Read Mark xv. 15-39. Key Text, Luke xxiii. 34.

The story of the Crucifixion is in itself so enthralling that it is difficult to pick out any particular points for stress. Teachers should do their best to make it clear to the scholars that, apart from all theological implications, Jesus was crucified owing to the jealousy of the leading religious men among the Jews, because they saw clearly that, if he were accepted as the Messiah, their power and influence would be gone. They won the people to them by making out that Jesus was a blasphemer against God; and this, coupled with the fact that Jesus seemed so weak in the hands of his enemies, paralysed the hopes of those who at one time ardently supported him. It is significant that the mob chose Barabbas rather than Jesus, because Barabbas was a "physical force" man, one who believed in fighting the authorities with their own weapons. There are three significant utterances which ought to be remembered: (1) That of the mocker who said, "He saved others; himself he cannot save," for this shows the secret of Jesus' greatness. It was precisely because he did not try to save himself that he could save others. (2) The Gentile centurion's cry, "Truly this man was the Son of God," for this foreshadows the impression that Jesus was to make on all those who were not blinded by religious bigotry. A man who could believe so firmly in God's kingdom that he would bravely and willingly die for it must indeed be full of the Divine spirit. (3) Jesus' last words (Luke xxiii 34) — "Father, forgive them: they know not what they do," for these prove that Jesus is indeed the Saviour of mankind He loved all men, even his enemies, and returned to God entreating mercy for them all.

30th September—Review.

REPORTS.

Ballyhemlin.—The Sunday School treat took place this year in a field opposite the Meeting House. There was a good number of young people and their friends present. War-time showed its influence on the eatables this year, but in every way there was plenty of fun and enjoyment. "The Grand Old Duke of York" was in evidence this year as much as in previous years, and shoe-leather must have suffered in the skipping matches, as high totals up to a hundred and twenty were reached. Races, tug-of-war, and "rings," and the usual Sunday School games from time immemorial filled up the happy sunny hours of the evening until the time came to go home for sound, refreshing sleep.

* *

Banbridge.—We are pleased to note that Sergeant R. W. Glass, R.I.R., who some time ago was mentioned in Sir Douglas Haig's despatches, has now been awarded the "Medaille Militaire" by the French War Office for gallantry and devotion to duty. Sergeant Glass went out to France with the Ulster Division, and his many friends will be glad to know that his patriotism and devotion have been so well rewarded.

* *

Clough.—The Annual Sunday School Excursion took place on Saturday, July 28th. Brakes conveyed the party from Clough along the shore road, through Tyrella, Minerstown, Killough, to Ardglass. The weather was perfect, and the long drive was thoroughly enjoyed. We had our luncheon and tea at the Masonic Hall, which had been kindly lent to us for the occasion. The catering was splendidly done by the ladies of the congregation. The scholars were delighted with their sports and games on the Downs, and with their visit to the castle, and the sight of many ships. Leaving Ardglass at 7 p.m., all returned homewards, feeling that they had experienced a perfect day.

On Thursday, August 9th, a bazaar was held in Seaforde, in aid of the U.V.F. Hospital. The function was opened by Mrs. Sclater, Hillsborough. The four local Churches, always on most friendly terms, joined together in a united effort for the above deserving cause. Members of our Congregation did their share, and helped by work and by subscription, and at the Work Stall were seen :—Mrs. Davies and Miss Cromie, assisted by Mrs. M'Cammon, Miss Bell, Miss Irvine, Misses Thompson, and one of the artistes at the half-hour concerts was Rev. M. Watkins, Belfast. The proceeds amounted to over £250.

* *

Downpatrick.—Rev. Ralph Philipson, B.A., minister of our Church in Downpatrick, has been appointed Unitarian Chaplain by the Board of County Down Asylum.

* *

Newry.—On Sunday, July 1st, at morning service, the first anniversary of the Battle of the Somme was observed. The Rev. Geo. J. Slipper conducted the service, and preached an appropriate and impressive sermon based upon the text, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." In the evening the Sunday School Anniversary and Floral Service was held. There was a fair attendance of parents and friends. The Rev. J. Glynne Davies, of Banbridge, conducted the service, and gave an interesting address. Special hymns and anthems were rendered by the children and an augmented choir, Mrs. Slipper presiding at the organ.

Newry.—A successful Garden Fete was held in the Manse Grounds on Wednesday afternoon, August 1st, in aid of the Church Funds. The weather was gloriously fine, and there was a large attendance of members and friends from the other Churches in the town.

The Rev. J. H. Bibby (Moderator of the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland) presided at the opening proceedings, and in the course of an interesting address expressed his pleasure at being present to help the work carried on by the Rev. G. J. and Mrs. Slipper. He referred to the fact that as Secretary to the Orphan Society he was glad to be for the first time in the district where the Society was first discussed.

Miss Irvine, of Warrenpoint, a generous friend of the Congregation, declared the fete open, and a most pleasant afternoon and evening were spent.

List of Stall-Holders.

Farm and Produce Stall—Mrs. Henning, Mrs. Crothers, Miss Isabel Crothers, Mrs. M. M'Combe, and Miss Ina M'Comb

General Stall—Mrs. Slipper.

Refreshment and Cake Stall—Miss Warnock, Mrs. J. A. C. Rowland, Mrs. R. J. M'Combe, Mrs. Andre, Miss Eileen M'Combe, Mrs. R. Rowland, Misses Stoopes, &c.

Progressive Whist—Miss S. Warnock.

Shooting Gallery and Aunt Sally—Messrs. Isaac Moore and Albert Megaw, Master Allan Rowland.

Stewards—Mr. R. J. M'Combe, Mr. J. Mitchell, Mr. R. Lockhart, Master George Hendren, and Rev. G. J. Slipper.

Cake and Flower Competitions were held, the judges for Cakes being Mrs. Truesdale, and for Flowers Miss Irvine and Mrs. Hutchison.

During the evening an open-air concert was held, in which the following ladies and gentlemen assisted :—Miss Kirwan, Miss Marshall, Mr. and Mrs. Jones, Miss Cleland, Miss Littlewood, Rev. J. Glynne Davies and Mr. Lyons. Miss Lamb kindly acted as accompanist

* *

Templepatrick.—The annual gathering of the scholars of the Sunday School and the Day School was held at the Roughfort, on Monday evening, the 4th June. The weather was not favourable for fetes, but, notwithstanding much rain, all the scholars assembled, and heartily enjoyed the tea prepared for them. Early in the evening the younger ones went home, but the elder scholars remained, and later in the

evening their numbers were largely augmented, and as the rain cleared off a pleasant enough time was spent in games, dancing, etc. The proceedings closed about 11 o'clock.

In the course of his sermon on Sunday, 1st July, Rev. A. Turner made reference to the anniversary of the great conflict on the Somme, in which the Ulster Division bravely played its part. "To-day," he said, "is the first anniversary of that fight—so quickly does the time fly; and to-day our memories are sad and splendid, sorrowful but proud. For on that day, just twelve months ago, the young men from this district, men who had grown up in our midst, and whom we knew, went over the top for King and country to do or to die. It will never be forgotten how nobly they both did their duty and died. It was said of them that they 'added a page of glory, not merely to the history of their province, but to the history of the Empire.' To them fell one of the hardest tasks; and though in the light of after events, it seemed, humanly speaking, an impossible task, they nevertheless achieved it, and went as far as they were asked to go. The price they paid was terrible. The roll-call after the Battle of the Somme revealed their great losses, and up till quite recently the official documents have been coming to homes in Ulster, stating that their loved ones reported missing on that great day must now be presumed to have died. It is an anniversary for us of profound sorrow, and it will be well for us if we can mingle our sorrow with joy and pride—pride in that our men could face such a terrible ordeal in the cause of righteousness and not flinch! Two of our dear boys, whose names are on the Roll of Honour, fell that day, never to answer the roll-call here again. You will know them—Joseph and James Harper—brothers. Plain and simple boys they were, but they did their duty nobly, and gave their life. We tender to their widowed mother our deepest sympathy in her heavy bereavement, and pray that our Heavenly Father may grant unto her the comforting influences of His Holy Spirit. Many other families throughout our districts have been bereaved, as indeed have families all round this sorrow-stricken world. Humbly we commend them to the Father of all Mercies, knowing that He alone can bind up the wounds, and heal the broken hearts. May the night of sorrow soon pass, and may there come in its place a new morning, bringing healing and blessing, and the Peace of God which passeth understanding." After the benediction the Dead March in Saul was played.

ECHOES.

Trust in the eternal truths of conscience and duty and God. The sober wisdom of that homely precept of one of the great poets, "Hitch your wagon to a star," will be acknowledged to the end.—*Rev. H. W. Foote.*

Let us never forget that hope in us kindles hope in others, that smiles beget smiles, that trust creates trust, that goodness awakens goodness, that love inspires love, and that in unseen but sure ways integrity, strength, and honour in us plant seeds of honour, strength, and integrity in other lives, of many of whom we know nothing.—*Rev. J. T. Sunderland.*

The test of all our moral pretensions, of all our alleged faith in God and heaven, is applied in crises. Any of us can profess to think this is a good world and a good human nature when life runs without jar; but, when tragedy confronts us, to keep clear-headed and go straight on in the proper duties, not letting up nor breaking down, is to prove that we have sat at the feet of great teachers and learned their lessons well.—*Dr. George A. Thayer.*

"In the old castle at Edinburgh the way to the crown jewels leads through a very humble doorway and through a very dingy and circuitous passage.

The humble doorways of common duties are frequently the way to the room where God keeps His jewels."—*Rev. J. H. Jowett.*

Leaving the past behind, asking no praise, pay, or reward, submitting ourselves to the grand law of progress, turning the way of faith and hope, giving ourselves to the nearest present duty, asking ourselves only what does right or truth or love bid, we thus enter into the joyful life of the children of God.—*Charles F. Dole.*

This is the message of the Risen Lord to men. He has become the link between us and all that is highest and best. We know that he has overcome all evil and left it behind. We know that Christ must ascend to the highest, and yet we know also that he will not enter where we cannot follow. We know that his love binds him to us as strongly as his rights carry him to God.—*Marcus Dods.*

The choir invisible! Who are the members of it if not all those who in any quiet, simple way are doing the day's work, whatever it may be, as well as they know how; who are trying to make life pleasanter and happier for those to whom their lives are naturally bound; who where they see a wrong or lie are quick to strike it down; who where they see a right thing to be done or a true word to be spoken say, "Here am I: send me"?—*John Chadwick.*

I do not say that you can make yourself merry and happy when you are in a physical condition which is contrary to such mental condition; but by practice and effort you can learn to withdraw from it, refusing to allow your judgments and actions to be ruled by it. "What does that matter?" you will learn to say. "It is enough for me to know that the sun does shine, and that this is only a weary fog that is round about me for a moment. I shall come out into the light beyond presently." This is faith—faith in God, who is Light.—*George Macdonald.*

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